The Annual Review of Interdisciplinary Justice Research Volume 8, 2019

Edited by
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The University of Winnipeg
Centre for Interdisciplinary Justice Studies (CIJS)
ISSN 1925-2420

A "win-win for everyone" Except Prisoners: Kingston Penitentiary Tours as a Staff, Media and Public Relations Campaign

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Abstract:

In October 2013, Correctional Service Canada (CSC) decommissioned Kingston Penitentiary (KP) in Kingston, Ontario. To commemorate KP's closing, CSC organized facility tours for staff members and their families, journalists and the public. Based on an analysis of an Access to Information disclosure informed by Goffman's (1959) conceptualization of impression management, we examine CSC's backstage work integral to the organization of KP tours. Our analysis reveals how CSC sought to elevate positive stories of penitentiary staff, as well as the organization's contribution to public safety and the local community as a means of neutralizing opposition to the closure of the facility expressed by stakeholders. We conclude by discussing the implications of carceral symbolism and the form it takes when punishment memorialization is driven by the imperatives of "correctional" agencies.

Keywords:

prison tourism; carceral symbolism; carceral retasking; Correctional Service Canada; Access to Information

Introduction

In April 2012, the Government of Canada announced it would be closing Kingston Penitentiary (KP) in Kingston, Ontario, the Regional Treatment Centre (RTC) located on its grounds, and Leclerc Institution in Laval, Quebec, as part of their deficit reduction efforts (Public Safety Canada, 2012). At the time, KP was the oldest and longest running active site of confinement in the country.

The announcement generated backlash from multiple stakeholders. During a time when Correctional Service Canada (CSC) facilities were becoming increasingly crowded as a result of "tough on crime" measures introduced by the governing Conservatives (Shook, 2013), prisoners expressed concerns about the closures. Notably, they problematized the transfer of protective custody prisoners and those living with severe mental health issues to nearby penitentiaries like Collins Bay Institution, which were not set up to accommodate these populations (Collins Bay Inmate Committee, 2013; also see Shook, 2015).

The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers (UCCO), who represent CSC guards, also opposed the decision, warning the "hasty, secretive and dangerous" move would put staff and public safety at "risk" (UCCO, 2012a). In online posts and press releases, the union went from initially raising questions about the closures (UCCO, 2012b) to declaring "We're going to fight!" (UCCO, 2012c). A "Manifesto" was issued and an "[o]ccupation of federal government ministers' offices" ensued, demanding a reversal of the decision that would see CSC staff relocated to different penitentiaries (UCCO, 2012d, 2012e).

Given that KP was built in 1835 and was a long-standing fixture in the city, reactions from community leaders and residents ranged from anger, to sadness, to genuine worry for those working and the many imprisoned there. As a journalist remarked, "Many people in Kingston are sad to see the penitentiary close. They understand it's old… but they love it. So many of them have worked there or

volunteered there" (Cameron, 2013). Emerging alongside these reactions was speculation about the future of the heritage site. Ideas for facility "re-use" (Moran, 2015, p. 129) included establishing a tourist destination dubbed "Alcatraz North," building a world-class sailing facility along the shores of Lake Ontario, and other economic development initiatives (Ferguson *et al.,* 2014).

Facing community criticism and internal discord, CSC had a substantial prisoner, staff and public relations problem to manage. They were an organization facing a crisis (Allen & Caillouet, 1994). This paper explores why and how CSC subsequently engaged the media and cultural landscape to craft and patrol narratives about the decommissioning of Canada's first penitentiary, primarily through the planning and execution of KP tours offered to CSC staff members and their loved ones, members of the press and the general public.

Prison tourism is popular in Canada and elsewhere across the world (Wilson *et al.,* 2017). We engage with literature on space, symbolism, as well as marketing from carceral geography and criminal justice studies to guide our analysis of CSC's carceral retasking of and stage setting at KP. "Carceral retasking" refers to transformation of a penal space "into another enterprise that continues to reproduce imprisonment as a dominant idea and/or material practice" (Ferguson *et al.*, 2014, pp. 83–84). In so doing, we examine how the carceral past is strategically used and exploited (Morin, 2013) by proponents of incarceration to propel the carceral present into the future. Drawing on Goffman's (1959) conceptualization of impression management and documents obtained using an Access to Information (ATI) request, we illustrate how CSC's prison tourism initiative was configured in the backstage of the federal penitentiary system by officials who sought to reinforce the historical and contemporary significance of the organization, both locally and nationally, while commemorating the contributions of their staff members. Building on our previous research exploring CSC's role in punishment memorialization in Canada (Kleuskens *et al.,* 2016), we highlight how the emergence of KP tours is significant

in terms of its contribution to neutralizing critiques directed at the organization and reinforcing their preferred brand of carceral symbolism. We also show how these tours are connected to CSC's material reproduction through its relationship with non-profit industrial complex organizations involved in the initiative who benefit from the deprivation of liberty (INCITE!, 2007), which is one form of carceral-charity symbiosis. We conclude by discussing paths forward for cultural interventions aimed at disrupting the carceral present and working toward a non-carceral future in Canada.

Prison Tourism Spaces, Symbolism and Marketing

To provide conceptual guidance for our analysis, we engage with three prominent themes in carceral geography and criminal justice studies: space, symbolism and marketing. These themes are also pronounced in our dataset.

First, carceral geographies draw attention to how spaces of containment are constituted and reconstituted. Notably, Baer and Ravneberg (2008) argue that inside and outside become entangled in prison spaces. This is true of operational carceral sites (Turner, 2016), but also decommissioned ones (Moran, 2015). The carceral site is still the inside, yet through tours outsiders are invited into it for many reasons, from inspection to voyeurism (Ross, 2015). To invoke Goffmanian language, perhaps the total institution can be permeated, with the frontstages of carceral institutions created allowing for the boundary between the inside and the outside to be broached or suspended (Turner, 2016). When the inside is turned into a viewing centre for outsiders, this physical and symbolic boundary is inverted. The inside is made public, and yet prisoners and their stories often become edited out or included in ways that reproduce negative stereotypes about them (Wilson, 2008).

Second, literature on the communications strategies of penal system entities examines issues of framing and representation, most often in the media (Mawby, 1999). Specifically, literature on carceral symbolism examines how "criminal justice" bureaucracies create and

communicate messages and representations to manage public understandings of criminalization and punishment. Penal system agencies must promote themselves and sometimes tout myths of success not validated by evaluation or empirical data (Rostami *et al.*, 2015). Part of this approach to carceral symbolism involves communicating or partnering with news media and cultural industries. Goffman's (1959) writings on impression management are a common conceptual undercurrent in this work (e.g., Mawby, 2014). Chermak and Weiss (2005) argue news media are crucial players that penal system agencies must contend with to reinforce their legitimacy among the public. As Ericson (1989) notes, these organizations patrol facts as a means of managing messages that media disseminate through several strategies. For instance, media liaison officers were created to help craft media messages and work with reporters to push particular narratives. These personnel undertake this work to manage risk and boost the legitimacy of their organizations (Mawby, 2014, 1999). Social media is also now used to accomplish these goals (Bullock, 2018) and promote the idea that penal system agencies create order (Ruddell & Jones, 2013). Websites are another domain in which penal system agencies advance corporate identity claims (Sillince & Brown, 2009). Managing identity and reputation is a key practice of bureaucracies (McDonnell & King, 2013). As our research on penal history museums (Kleuskens *et al.*, 2016) and virtual penitentiary tours (Shook *et al.*, 2018) shows, large organizations, including CSC, use multiple platforms to meet their strategic communications objectives.

Third, symbolic messages must be marketed to reach and resonate with audiences. What Lilly and Deflem (1996) call the "corrections-commercial complex" includes private prisons and contractors, but also includes the marketing work of publicly operated "correctional" agencies, as well as the commodification of facets of their operations. Part of this work can entail the rebranding of a penal system agency, even taking "notice of practices developed in the private, commercial and business sector including corporate image management, media

and public relations and marketing" (Mawby & Worthington, 2002, p. 871). In this sense, the use of operational and decommissioned carceral space, along with media and other representational work, can take on a corporate ethos. Carceral retasking in the form of prison tourism, which we examine below, commercializes the carceral past and present for public consumption (Luscombe *et al.,* 2018). What we show below is that CSC, along with some of its community partners, took the opportunity to exploit the dormant capital of the KP reserve (also see Gilmore, 2007) to derive material and symbolic gains from prison tours, normalizing, legitimizing, and celebrating the place of the carceral in Kingston and Canada in the process.

Crafting KP's Initial Carceral Retasking

As the 30 September 2013 closure of KP and RTC approached, CSC prepared a document entitled "Kingston Penitentiary and Regional Treatment Centre Closing Activities,"[1] outlining the "Events and communications products," "Target audiences," "Date/Time and Location" and "Costs." Four activities were proposed, with tours of the facilities featuring prominently in all but one of them.

First, the organization planned to hold an "Official Closing Ceremony." The "commemorative event" was to be official in form and tone, with senior CSC leadership "in attendance in formal dress uniform," along with an "Honour Guard and Pipes and Drummers" present "to open and close the ceremony." Also planned were "formal speeches from the Commissioner, the Regional Deputy Commissioner, [the] Kingston Penitentiary Warden and the RTC Executive Director." The document left open the possibility for a speech "on the history of KP… potentially delivered by Museum Curator Mr. David St. Onge." St. Onge was a CSC employee charged with curating exhibits on the federal penitentiary system showcased in a decommissioned warden's residence located across the street

[1] The online version of this paper includes hyperlinks to documents obtained through an ATI request processed by CSC. To facilitate reading, the quoted material following a hyperlinked and underlined passage is the reference for all quoted materials that appear until the next cited or hyperlinked and underlined reference.

from KP (Walby & Piché, 2011). A "number of VIPs/dignitaries and stakeholders, along with senior CSC personnel, KP and RTC staff members and former Wardens and Executive Directors," as well as "several local and national media outlets," were to be invited. They were to participate in "a guided tour of the Institutions with the help of staff, volunteers, the Museum and volunteers from the Friends of the Penitentiary Museum group."

The second proposed activity was a series of local staff assemblies and events. It was emphasized that "KP and RTC would have their own recognition event for staff that would be informal in nature and held on separate days to ensure that each site would have the time and space to recognize the importance of closing these penitentiaries." CSC planned to again have the "Honour Guard and Pipes and Drums… present to provide an opening and closing atmosphere to the assemblies, as well as significance to each event." The organization also planned to "recognize staff through speeches and the presentation of a memento to each staff member who currently work at KP and RTC, as well as staff members who worked at each site the day the closure of the institutions were announced." The staff activities were to take place over the course of a week "following the departure of the last inmate from each site," providing them with "an opportunity to be recognized before they take on their new assignments."

A third activity was to provide "Tours for local staff and family/friends," led by members of the Friends of the Penitentiary Museum, "to provide historical context." Scheduled to take place a few "days prior to the September 30, 2013 closure date," the event was to "be organized within KP/RTC and RHQ [Ontario Regional Headquarters] with the help of a volunteer committee to set up the tour routes, information, coordination and scheduling."

With CSC's Regional Deputy Commissioner for Ontario, Lori MacDonald, serving "as the 2013 KFLA [Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox Addington] United Way Chair" to raise funds for the 2013

"Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign (GCWCC)" in the region, she proposed "Limited Public Tours with proceeds to the Kingston and Area United Way." Based on "the experience of the closure of the B.C. Penitentiary, who held public tours after its closure" in May 1980, CSC expected "a very large number of interested parties to take part." Having concluded, "It is realistic to believe that tours could happen over several weeks due to the demand from the public, including local and national media," it was proposed that "a very strict schedule" be kept for the initiative "to coincide with the GCWCC Campaign." It was also recommended that "a volunteer committee with CSC staff, the CSC Museum, the Friends of the Penitentiary Museum and our local partner, Kingston Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO)" be created to organize the public tours.

With respect to KP tours, the relationship between CSC and the United Way is not simply one where the former does charitable work for the latter. Funds donated to the United Way in Kingston and other areas of Canada are often distributed to organizations such as local Elizabeth Fry Society and John Howard Society affiliates who provide services to federal prisoners at different stages of their gradual release into the community. This carceral-charity symbiosis through funding has been problematized for transforming the nature of non-profit work serving the criminalized, which has become increasingly control-oriented to the detriment of advocacy challenging regressive penal practices adopted by governments and "correctional" agencies who can alter the flow of dollars toward community-based organizations (Woolford & Hogeveen, 2014). Given the role that charities can play in extending carceral control into the community, it has been argued that they are part of the prison industrial complex (Davis, 2003) benefitting from state repression (INCITE!, 2007). We expand upon the implications of this issue below. Before doing so, we illustrate how the menu of activities for staff, media and public consumption was designed by CSC to mark the historical significance of Canada's first penitentiary, as well as its importance in the lives of its staff members. The emphasis on staff

commemoration activities and the attention directed toward valuing their work was one way CSC sought to neutralize the damage done to staff relations as a result of the announced facility closures the previous year. They also engaged these stakeholders through prison tourism and voyeurism (Ross, 2015) to benefit charity, generating a feel-good narrative when more than a year earlier the closure of Canada's oldest penitentiary had become a lightning rod for controversy.

Carceral Stage Setting at KP

Around the same time that the proposal for activities marking the closure of KP and RTC was created, CSC assembled a communications plan from which subsequent "carceral stage setting" (Walby & Piché, 2015) for the KP tours would flow. This backstage process involves a myriad of actors curating and marketing a tourism site for the purposes of "staging authenticity" in preparation for an eventual frontstage performance to be consumed by publics encouraged to imagine they are encountering the real deal (MacCannell, 1973), which in this case is the reality of imprisonment. Here, decommissioned "penal sites… become front regions planned to appear as back stages" (Walby & Piché, 2015, p. 233). However, while KP tours were marketed in this way, the initiative was meant to accomplish other goals for CSC.

A more detailed communication plan dated 16 August 2013 featured numerous sections. Under "Communications Objectives," three goals were outlined:

- Emphasize the important contribution of employees who have worked at KP, the Regional Treatment Centre (RTC) and Leclerc Institution.
- Pay tribute to the history of these institutions (52 years for Leclerc, 178 years for KP/RTC).

- Reinforce the degree to which CSC recognizes the significance KP, the Regional Treatment Centre (RTC) and Leclerc Institution has for employees.

At this stage in their planning, CSC officials were concerned with staff relations, which is also reflected in the excerpts pertaining to "Target Audiences." Internal audiences emphasized included current, former and retired KP staff, "Unions," as well as senior management and staff working in CSC's Ontario Region. There was no mention of prisoners is this section, who were either ignored or dehumanized under successive Conservative governments in Ottawa from 2006 to 2015 (Webster & Doob, 2015). External audiences included the "General public," "Media," "Community partners, including the Ontario Region Citizens Advisory Committee and Regional Victims Advisory Chair", along with "Elected representatives (federal, provincial and municipal)."

There were nine "Strategic Considerations" noted in the communications plan, five of which are relevant to our analysis. First, there was recognition of "these institutions' long-standing history with Canada's correctional system and status within their respective communities," which necessitate "commemorative activities… to recognize their history and mark their legacy." Second, "Staff recognition" was noted as "a key consideration in the planning of events and communication activities surrounding the closures." Third, having acknowledged that the announced facility closures resulted in "negative or critical" reactions from the "public, media, parliamentarians and other stakeholders," it was noted that "interest in the closures has remained fairly steady since that time." In other words, CSC still had a media and public relations problem on its hands. Fourth, while there was no mention of the campaign to re-open the prison farms the federal government shuttered in 2010 under the guise of cost-savings (Epstein *et al.*, 2014; Goodman & Dawe, 2016) or local resistance efforts against the construction of new units on the grounds of many of Kingston's penitentiaries (McElligott, 2017, p. 108), CSC officials expressed concern that "It is possible

with a large public event that groups may take this opportunity to voice concerns or discontent." Foreseeing this, it was advised that "steps should be taken to try to mitigate this from interfering with the events taking place to commemorate the KP site." Fifth, it was expected that "Media, community partners and internal audiences will likely ask about the future use of KP and Leclerc," requiring "Communications messages… be developed in advance to be able to respond."

In another section of the document entitled "Communications / Media Approach," "national and regional communication products" were recommended. However, only the former were noted, including a message from the Commissioner to all staff and a prepared speech, articles in *This Week at CSC* and *Let's Talk Express*, a "National News Release," a "National Media Advisory," "Media Lines/Key messages," and "B-Roll/video (for media and internal purposes)."

Building on this proposed content, a section entitled "Media Approach" included a dedicated subsection for Leclerc Institution and another for KP and RTC. With respect to the latter, a "proactive and reactive" approach was specified, which acknowledged that mass media have the power to portray prisons in ways that can negatively or positively shape public opinion (Mahan & Lawrence, 1996). Proactive measures included the development of "media lines," putting in place a "media coach prior to interviews," specifying times where media would have access to parts of the closing ceremony, speeches and "interviews with designated spokespersons," scheduling "Photo opportunities… with speakers and inside the institution in designated areas (ex. empty cells, common area)," and issuing a "media advisory" requiring members of the press "to register for these interviews in advance of the event." Reactive measures to incidents like "media requests" were to be executed by "Communications representatives from Ontario [R]egion" and "two NHQ Media Relations" officials "on site to provide additional support, as the subject of institutional closures has always been closely coordinated at the national level."

With logistical planning underway in August and September 2013 to make decisions concerning tour length, frequency, ticket pricing, group sizes and photography, volunteer solicitation, training and management, as well as security, a script for the tour was developed to mirror CSC's communication objectives of staff recognition and institutional commemoration, a development we were unaware of when we published our initial study of KP tours. At that time, we asserted that "[t]ours are also products of the engagement and interaction of tour group members. Due to the largely unscripted nature of the KP tour, the punitive views among guests influenced the tour by helping to nudge the tour guide toward certain topics" (Ferguson *et al.*, 2014, p. 93). We now know that volunteer guides did not need to be "nudged" at all, as the themes we observed on the tour were largely scripted.

In the eighteen stops of the KP tour, there were five prominent themes. The first theme was architecture and space. The script emphasized dates of construction and noted architectural features of the penitentiary, such as the intimidating "neo-classical" design of the North Lodge entrance. The second theme was institutional operations, focusing on the official purpose of each of the buildings featured on the tour, such as the cell-block, the main dome, the administration building and other built structures. The third theme was prisoner rehabilitation, which was discussed in stops at the Private Family Visitation (PFV) units and prison shop. For example, the script directs tour guides to quote the following from CSC's website: "the purpose [of the PFVs] is to encourage inmates to develop and maintain family and community ties in preparation for their return to the community." The fourth theme was the professionalism of staff members. This manifested through discussions about the many roles (e.g., wardens, keepers, guards, shop workers, RTC staff, etc.) required to successfully operate the facilities. The fifth theme was treacherous working conditions. Prisoner riots, escape attempts and the deaths of staff members were emphasized. Within these communications, "crime" has a master status (Mawby, 2010). Representations of danger are used to draw

people in (Ferguson *et al*., 2014). No information was included in the script that could reflect poorly on CSC, such as the brutality of wardens and guards toward prisoners (Hennessy, 1999).

CSC's approach to prison tourism is infused with penal meaning-making that positions imprisonment as secure, rehabilitative and necessary to community safety, a self-serving narrative that smacks of "carceral friendly distortion" (Kleuskens *et al.*, 2016, p. 587). This messaging was reinforced in a volunteer orientation tour involving a retired CSC employee, three summer students, two research volunteers and a board member of the Federal Penitentiary Museum retired from Parole Board of Canada. Documents provided during the session included a brochure to be given to media and visitors entitled "Historical Overview of Kingston Penitentiary" and the "United Way K.P. Tour Speaking Notes" discussed above. Those visiting KP were to also receive a map of the facility with tour rules and instructions, as well as a liability release form prepared by federal government lawyers.

As the event team arranged for public tours of KP, CSC communications officials assembled a "media tour proposal" to ensure their brand of carceral symbolism would be communicated to members of the press who could then share meanings of penality with their respective audiences. A "National media advisory" was planned to notify journalists they could reserve a spot to take part in a tour. CSC planned "two to three media tours departing as early as 0730 hours since public tours already scheduled for this day begin at 0900 hours," which "would last approximately an hour and a half." Each tour would have a capacity of thirty people, plus room for "additional camera operators." They were to follow "the existing and approved route currently provided to members of the public." Whereas the charitable tours were to be led by former KP and RTC staff volunteers, the media tours were to be "guided by A/Regional Deputy Commissioner Mike Ryan, Former Warden of Kingston Penitentiary Jay Pike, and the Correctional Service of Canada Museum Historian Dave St. Onge." Media advisors would also be on hand to "assist

with the tours." Like paying members of the public, journalists would learn about "the historical and operational perspective of the penitentiary," while also hearing about "CSC's partnership with the United Way, and the fundraising effort." The plan noted that, at the end of the media tour, members of the press "may be given the opportunity… to ask all the tour guides questions while RHQ and NHQ media relations staff is present."

CSC communications officials also assembled a media backgrounder to be sent to journalists via email following their KP tour. The document outlined the rationale for facility closures (i.e., operational cost savings in a context of government-wide deficit reduction, operational and design problems associated with the older institutions), the significance of KP (i.e., as Canada's oldest penitentiary, its maximum-security rating, its rated capacity, its land and buildings), and information about RTC (i.e., its role as a psychiatric institution, its rated capacity, its age, etc.). The backgrounder also emphasized that CSC executed a plan for the transfer of prisoners and staff, while noting that "no decisions have yet to be made with respect to possible future plans for the infrastructure and land." Similar narratives were included in media lines approved by the office of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness as KP's closing activities were being rolled out.

Following media advisories requesting that journalists confirm their participation in KP tours for the media on 11 October 2013, dozens of networks from Kingston, across Ontario, as well as throughout Canada requested access to the KP media tours. With charitable tours of KP already underway, it was show time for CSC as staff, journalists and the public descended on the grounds of Canada's oldest penitentiary reserve.

Turning KP's Controversial Closure into a Stakeholder Relations Win

The KP tours, which sought to underscore staff contributions, as well as pay homage to the site's heritage and significance, were an all-around success. With respect to staff relations, the tours were offered to staff members at the end of September 2013 as originally planned. However, CSC scheduled more of them from 26–31 October 2013 on "a first-come, first-served reservation system" in groups of thirty due to "an exceptional response… and due to overwhelming demand." To facilitate more tours, CSC's Assistant Regional Deputy Commissioner for Ontario also issued a request for "any recent KP/RTC alumni [to] step forward and lead the tour as guides." That such a call for assistance was required and answered by former KP and RTC staff signals the degree to which the facility closures ended on a positive note.

Penal system agencies work hard to win over public opinion and push for favourable media coverage (Mawby, 2010). To secure a media relations win, whereby their preferred messaging was incorporated in news coverage, CSC made sure "[a]ll reporters were provided the contact information (business cards) for NHQ Media Relations in case they had additional questions." Following tours, "CSC communications staff sent a package by email to attending media with the backgrounder of the closure and a historical overview backgrounder." These efforts translated into success, with a post-mortem noting the following:

> Resulting media coverage was positive. Focus was on the actual closure of the institution and speculation of what will happen to the facility, on high profile inmates and institutional history. Focused on historical and operational aspects. Generally, the clips and quotes from Jay Pyke and Dave St-Onge. Even in resulting coverage, media appeared to be grateful for the chance to tour KP. Following the media

> tour, we noticed a decrease in the number of media requests to visit and film at KP.

At the height of the first wave of KP tours in October 2013, a number of pieces concerning KP tours appeared in the local *Kingston-Whig Standard* that reflected the appreciative tone CSC sought to strike, including a piece titled "Macabre memories, talented keepers, and elegant architecture" (Patterson, 2013). Coverage of the tours was generally positive in media outlets outside of Kingston as well (see Ferguson *et al.*, 2014, pp. 94–96).

With respect to the general public, KP tours generated an overwhelmingly positive response. The first wave of tours quickly sold out and "raised over $180,000" for the local United Way chapter. The demand for penal spectatorship (Brown, 2009) at KP was so great that CSC's Commissioner was inundated with messages through the "Ask the Commissioner" portal requesting that tours be extended, requiring the creation of a standard response that included the assurance "that we are exploring options to provide further opportunities to visit the Kingston Penitentiary." Social media sites such as Facebook were buzzing with tourists expressing enjoyment after attending the KP tour and, in some cases, frustrations about not being able to secure tickets (Ferguson *et al.*, 2014; Ferguson *et al.*, 2015). CSC would also later receive requests from other charities to run KP tour fundraisers, including in a 5 December 2013 letter from the Kidney Foundation of Canada and Epilepsy and Seizure Disorder Resource Centre, which were not accommodated.

While CSC noted some lessons learned and procedures requiring improvements, particularly in relation to media tours (e.g., measures to avoid last-minute preparations and the time it takes to shepherd journalists through penitentiaries), their first set of KP tours were successful from their perspective. They managed to transform the facility closures, which was initially a staff, public and media relations nightmare, into a winner for the organization.

KP Tours as Revenue Stream to Expand Prison Labour and Social Housing

Initially, there were no KP tours planned for public consumption beyond those organized to benefit the local United Way chapter. However, in the midst of a successful first wave of tours and untapped public demand evidenced by the disappointment expressed by those who could not get tickets for an "authentic" encounter behind bars (Ferguson *et al.,* 2014, p. 87), CSC initiated a conference call in October 2013 "with Habitat for Humanity CEO Kevin Marshman and V.P. Government Relations Jason Kuzminski." During the conversation, the non-profit welcomed the opportunity to extend and promote the KP tours partnership, agreeing "to work with CSC Communications to ensure mutually satisfactory messaging." While Habitat for Humanity would receive funds generated from KP tours, CSC would be able "to engage in more house building training for our inmates… which in turn would support offender rehabilitation and reintegration." This agreement came on the heels of a recently established memorandum of understanding between the two entities to use prisoner labour for its projects. With this plan in the works, KP's story — from its initial construction in 1835 (McKendry, 1995, pp. 175–176) to its closure in 2013 — was book-ended by its reliance on the involuntary labour of prisoners. However, this was not among the narratives crafted by Habitat for Humanity and CSC to sell their partnership and KP tour tickets.

After a few drafts, a briefing note dated 11 October 2013 submitted to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness outlined who CSC believed would benefit from the endeavour. For the community, the "partnership addresses the need for safe, decent, affordable housing for low-income working families." Federal prisoners were said to benefit from the arrangement as they would have "a chance to contribute to the social economy and community while learning marketable employment skills and gaining employment experience." This "opportunity to work in the community and interact with individuals from the neighbourhood"

was also advanced as a means of "fostering a sense of community in the offenders and improving the likelihood of successful reintegration upon release." CSC's framing of KP tours, which would line the coffers of Habitat for Humanity and yield direct benefits for the federal penitentiary system in the form "of additional work release placements" for its captives, positioned prisoner labour posts funded through prison tourism as voluntary, which in the context of forcible state confinement is not the case and is one among many problems with prison labour (Crete, 2017) within the "corrections-commercial complex" (Lilly & Deflem, 1996).

Habitat for Humanity issued a press release on 24 October 2013 to announce it was partnering with CSC "to Extend Tours of Legendary Kingston Penitentiary." Habitat's national president and CEO was then quoted stating, "Not only do people get a chance to catch of [*sic*] rare glimpse inside one of the world's older prisons, but they can do so knowing that they are also helping us build more homes for Canadian families." Also emphasized was that "[t]he tours are an extension of an existing partnership between Habitat for Humanity Canada and Correctional Service Canada that provides the opportunity for supervised low-risk offenders, such as those on parole, to expand their skills in construction trades by volunteering on Habitat build sites." The CEO for Habitat's Kingston chapter was also quoted noting, "CORCAN has been such a great partner and this opportunity is truly a win-win for everyone involved."

In the Canadian carceral landscape, where rehabilitation is seen as a key component of imprisonment despite efforts at diminishing its place by the federal government in power at the time (Webster & Doob, 2015), there was little evidence of anyone problematizing the carceral-charity symbiosis. Instead, the promotion of KP tours was sold to prospective visitors as a way to learn and to be entertained, all the while doing some good by contributing to charitable endeavours. Given the mutual reinforcement between the prison industrial complex and the non-profit industrial complex in Canada, it becomes difficult to imagine fundamental changes within and beyond

"criminal justice." As the second wave of KP tours quickly sold out and generated great fanfare (Ferguson *et al*., 2014), this moment in the history of Canadian federal imprisonment serves as another stark reminder that the "revolution will not be funded" (INCITE!, 2007).

Reflections on KP and Canada's (Non-)Carceral Future

As the Habitat for Humanity tours were concluding, CSC prepared a briefing note on 20 November 2013 for the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness outlining plans for the full decommissioning of the KP reserve. At the time, portions of KP itself were to be used as a temporary archival storage facility for CSC until the transfer of files to Library and Archives Canada was complete. The document also referred to a plan to sell and transfer the lands and buildings in accordance with federal government regulations. Despite the fanfare associated with prison tourism at "Alcatraz North," the briefing note stated, "No additional public tours will be undertaken".

Much has changed since the first and second waves of charitable KP tours in the fall of 2013, although much remains the same. Tours run at KP through the spring, summer, and fall via a partnership between the City of Kingston, CSC and the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. Tour proceeds are divided, with a portion allocated to youth homelessness initiatives in the city organized through the United Way. From 2016 to 2018, the tours contributed more than $1.5 million to this cause (Kingstonist, 2018). A United Way sign out in front of KP thanks visitors for "making a difference in the lives of youth."

KP tours have also become more lucrative with increased ticket prices and a new "Extended" ($60) tour offered alongside the "Standard" ($35) tour. During a recent "Standard" tour attended by the second author, the guide encouraged the group to feel greater empathy with prisoners, a new tour narrative that appeared on the heels of criticism concerning the dehumanization of the incarcerated in KP tours (Bokma, 2017; also see Piché & Walby, 2016). Only a

few minutes later, however, the group heard a retired CSC guard recount chilling details surrounding the murder of a colleague. Shortly after, visitors learned about the time when prisoners took several guards hostage and began bashing in the heads and bodies of so-called "undesirable prisoners," killing two of them during the 1971 KP riot. Apart from the group hearing narratives about issues of mental health in prisons from a retired RTC nurse, what remains is the carceral symbolism that was created and perfected through CSC's carceral stage-setting process and subsequently communicated during the initial two waves of charitable KP tours (i.e., the emphasis on prisoner violence, the need for institutional security and the use of force, escapes by infamous captives, as well as brief mentions of rehabilitation efforts). The invisibility of the mundane realities and critiques of incarceration remains as well (Ferguson *et al.*, 2014, pp. 89–94).

The initiative has also become more commoditized, with a "KP Tours Convenience Store" situated in a waiting room where visitors gather before the tours begin, which sells water bottles, hats and other items branded with the new "KP Tours" logo. In this room, visitors are encouraged to take a free "souvenir mug shot" and share it on social media with the hashtag #KingstonPen. Afterwards visitors are directed into a "KP Tours Gift Shop," which sells a variety of items, including tour-themed T-shirts, mugs, pins, keychains, hats, magnets, puzzles, books and metal food trays so visitors can eat like prisoners in the comfort of their own homes. Some of these items are also available for purchase in stores downtown, including at the Visitor Experience Centre located in front of Kingston City Hall. There, tourists can purchase punishment-themed items such as "The Kingston Pen" (a pen resembling a metal file), pick up a KP Tours brochure and wander through a small "Kingston Museums" exhibit that includes, among other things, cell bars for tourists to stand behind and take "Cell-fies" to show their friends and family. As with souvenir mug shots, the "Cell-fies" mock and trivialize the experience of incarceration while documenting having been to prison (Luscombe *et al.*, 2018). KP tour experiences and trinkets are

examples of what Baudrillard (1994) termed "simulacra," or simulations, whose significations pervert and distort what it means to experience something firsthand. While ex-prisoners are plagued by the stigma of being behind bars, many prison tourists proudly show off their association with incarceration in public places and spaces, adopting it as part of their self-presentation.

A significant legacy of KP's decommissioning is that its success resulted in CSC dedicating more time and resources to engage the media and cultural landscape, where critiques of its policies and practices are numerous. Demonstrating the backstage work (Goffman, 1959) penal system agencies do as they patrol these communications (Ericson, 1989) and attempt to shape them (Mawby, 2010), in 2015 CSC launched "Beyond the Fence: A Virtual Tour of a Canadian Penitentiary," which guides online users through portions of Bath Institution and Collins Bay Institution to get them closer to the realities of imprisonment through CSC's lens (Shook *et al.*, 2018). Similar to KP tours, CSC's virtual tour positions imprisonment as beneficial to Canadian society and necessary to the safety of its citizens.

Borrowing from Gilmore's work (2007) on prison construction in order to make sense of the inverse process (i.e., erecting new prisons), the dormant capital of the KP reserve is being reactivated through prison tourism, which derives profits from the carceral past in a manner that sustains, rather than challenges, carceral logics. A zine put together by Kingston-based EPIC / End the Prison Industrial Complex (2013) to mark the closure of KP, entitled *Closure is not Abolition*, captures this idea, highlighting the fact that decommissioning sites of confinement often marks the erection of other carceral spaces where the pains of imprisonment are experienced by more prisoners (see Piché, 2014). The closure of KP could have and could still serve as an opportunity to advance radical alternatives to incarceration if the penitentiary reserve became a site of critical punishment memorialization that foregrounds the voices of prisoners and acknowledges the brutalities of the carceral past that

persist at present (Fiander *et al.,* 2016). As prison tourism proliferates across the world (Wilson *et al.,* 2017), there is an urgent need for analysts of punishment's cultural work to understand and resist it to help chart a future beyond carcerality. Such efforts will require grappling with non-profits, corporations, state entities and others who reap benefits when people "Step Behind the Iron Bars" (St. Lawrence Parks Commission *et al*., no date).

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